

Grand Isle Mutual Aid Meeting
GI-REMC
June 5, 2023 – Draft Minutes
Grand Isle County Sheriff's Department and Virtual

Attendance: Brandi Latimer (NH EMD), Jacquie Kelley (VDH), Pat Robinson (SHVFD), Bill Johnson (IVFC), Bill Baron (GI EMD/ GIFD), Peter Brescia (Alburgh Rescue), Ray Allen (GICSO), Adam White (GIVFD), Mike Murdock (NHVFD), Ron Kumetz (Alburgh VFD), Nancy Frantz (SHR), Shaun Coleman (NRPC), Ray Mitchel (GIR/GIFD), Karen Browning (SH Aux), Chuck Hulse (SHR) and Colby Glod (USCG)

The meeting began at 7:02 p.m. followed by roll call. Ron chaired the meeting.

Changes to Agenda

None.

US Coast Guard

Adam reported that he met with USCG in Burlington previously to start an open dialogue how we can help each other. One of the things the USCG asked was to always use Channel 23 for dispatch for marine rescue calls. They will add us to their system.

Colby reported that USCG takes 40 minutes to get to entrance of Mallet's Bay and 45 minutes to the tip of South Hero. It take approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours for anything further north of passage.

USCG has two 29-foot aluminum boats and one 45-foot aluminum boat. The largest issue now is staffing. Generally, they have 4 people on duty which is the bare minimum for a boat. During winter months they have a full ice rescue team. They can rescue only surface level people and are unable to retrieve below the surface. They do not retrieve vehicles or equipment.

USCG Burlington has no local aircraft. In the event one is needed, it takes 1 – 1 ½ hours for response to arrive due to the time it takes to assemble crew and go through mandatory equipment checks.

Channel 16 is being monitored all the time and the station phone is manned 24x7. If you need a boat or aircraft, that is a station level decision. Aircraft comes from Maine.

Currently working through legal parameters for getting lights on rescue trucks. Lighting is an internal coast guard issue related to training and experience of staff. In the event the crew is needed, USCG will get there as soon as possible however they are beholden to more traffic laws than a first response vehicle so it will likely take longer to arrive.

The USCG has a 229 which can be trailered. Recently it was trailered up to Apple Island marina from Burlington in order to cut response time from the Lake.

Normally USCG operates on half hour checks during normal operations. In the event of running something in tandem with local response, they would conduct half hour checks at a minimum.

USCG generally takes the lead for search and rescue operations on the lake. They would become on-scene coordinator and South Portland Main sector would take SAR Command. It happened last year during a capsized boat response in the southern end of Lake. The coordination there worked out but there can always be improvement. For law enforcement, USCG will look to local LE for expertise.

Ron thanked Colby and noted that it would be helpful to have a Coast Guard representative participate in future meetings occasionally. Colby thanked everyone for the opportunity and hopes to attend the next meeting to improve inter-agency relationships.

Grand Isle County Peer Support Group - Chuck Halse, South Hero Rescue

The group recently took a 32-hour training class on acute stress and peer support. First line workers and front-line workers are at higher risk for mental health disorders than the general public. They are less likely to seek help than the general public. The group's goal is providing peer support to first responders and their families, support individuals and crews of first response agencies, to provide periodic check-ins with crews and facilitate well-being, to provide contact with specialists and counselors who deal with trauma and to help prepare for situations rather than react to them.

He distributed information for the departments and noted he would be reaching out to each of the chiefs. They are not therapists or counselors but there to offer information on who can assist them.

There was a brief discussion on EMDR (eye moving desensitization and reprogramming). Basically, when you are on scene, the thinking side of your brain processes in one way and your emotional side processes another and the two don't talk to each other which leads to anxiety, nightmares, etc. A trained counselor can help reprogram the information so you are not in mental stress. The group can help get you to a counselor who is trained in this.

Harry added that some studies prove that talking about trauma on the day of can significantly help how your brain process the information compared to going to sleep at night and waiting for a future time to process it. Chuck noted they are trained with the EMD part but are associated with with [Vermont Center for Responder Wellness](#) (Sonny Provetto who is a former state trooper, EMDR clinician and a trauma consultant for police departments and emergency responders nationwide).

Grand Isle – REMC

VEM Update

Harry Schoppmann introduced himself as the new NW Regional Coordinator and provided his background and types of support he can provide including plans, resource information, training and also serves as one of four watch officers for the State EOC. If a community needs to stand up an emergency operations center, they can call VEM and ask for Harry to support local operations. His background is NYC fireman and fire chief for Underhill.

Shaun noted that the Sheriff's Office is the County EOC if there were a county-wide disaster.

VEM Conference is on Sept 21. At Burke Mountain Resort. Each REMC can have one free room for the night.

Eric Forand is the interim Director until a new Director is found.

There's \$8 million in mitigation funding available.

EM related trainings are located [here](#)

For the REMC, the new language for quorum was passed by the legislature recently (20% of municipalities). Shaun gave the background of LEPC13 as subcommittee of GICMAA. Harry gave an overview of committee membership REMC are eligible for.

Ray Allen made a motion to form the GI-REMC. Mike Murdock seconded. Motion carried.

REMC Election of Officers

GICMAA decided to have the President and Vice president serve as Chair and Vice Chair for REMC. No one volunteered to serve on any of the state committee at this time.

Bylaw Updates

Shaun reviewed the bylaw changes that were distributed previously including replacing LEPC 13 and REMC, meeting frequency, and adding following Vermont's Open Meeting Law requirements.

Mike Murdock motioned to adopt the updated GICMAA Bylaws with the amendment of adding REMC quorum of 5. Ron Kumetz seconded. Motion carried.

Vermont Dept of Health – Jacquie Kelley, Northern EP

Jacquie reported she has been working with regional partners on addressing the needs of homelessness in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties, especially with hotel voucher program sunsetting on May 1 and June 1. This led to a discussion on homelessness in Grand Isle County. Ray noted there aren't any homeless camps similar to Chittenden County and Franklin County. He recommended contacting the State Parks.

There has been a lot of conversation around cooling shelters. There are cooling sites located on VDH website. Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity and the United Way are inquiring about cooling shelters with information on services and resources. Shaun noted that through support from Jared at VDH, a lot of hot weather planning was conducted last year. One of the questions that came up was whether the MRC would be available to support the cooling shelter either to help manage or conduct wellness checks. They would need training to staff a shelter but they can support a shelter with wellness checks. Contact the VEM Watch Officer. Ray added that he would contact the Red Cross and get support from Angie Robinson who volunteers for Red Cross and lives nearby. The islands have lots of cooling sites.

Adam asked who he should contact for Narcan supplies for crews. Jacquie will have someone from VDH follow up.

GICMAA

Minutes – Ron motioned to accept the minutes. Pat seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – No report.

Bill to Present - Shaun reported that the Treasurer e-mailed the latest statements and invoices which were e-mailed earlier.

Mike made a motion to have the Treasurer pay the billing for Dispatch. Pat seconded. Motion carried.

Mike added that a report would have the bi-monthly financial outlook and breakdown of incoming and outgoing funding.

Critical Incident Response Team - Pat reported he has been working with Ray on creating a Team and handed out the SOGs. Basically, the team would be called out to support an active threat event as requested by Sheriff's Department. Members will respond to their respective stations and mount a response to the scene on marked apparatus. He presented an overview of the program. Ray noted one of his deputy's (Erick) recently attended an active shooter training course the state put on.

There was a discussion about the draft SOGs. The group will review the SOGs and offer input at the next meeting.

Department Updates

Ron was approached recently by Hero's fund which raises a lot of money for first response organizations. They have a simple grant process awards up to \$2,000 for 501 (c)3 organizations. Ron will send out the information to everyone. The grant period ends June 30.

County Emergency Services Administrator Position

Bill reviewed past attempts on creating the position. He discussed the need for the position and sought support for creating and funding the position through an ad hoc committee. The position would help with coordination and support of fire and EMS including trainings, grant support and coordination of activities. The group discussed creation of a job description, salary, list of duties, oversight, liability and outreach to selectboards. The group supported the idea but wanted to ensure the details would be worked out before going out to Selectboards. Previous efforts targeted a salary of \$20k. Harry mentioned that when he was a chief, grants and FEMA funding following disasters could be used to help pay for the position.

Committee volunteers included Ron Kumetz, Nancy Frantz, Adam White and Bill Baron. Bill will coordinate meetings.

Other Business

Ron introduced and welcomed Pete Brescia from newly formed Alburgh Rescue to the group. Mike asked about the Bylaws and Mutual Aid Agreement. The Mutual Aid Agreement actually lists Alburgh Rescue and the bylaws only list Clarenceville Noyan FD by name.

Mike reported that Front Line Females camp will be held this summer and they have a list of items needed. He will send those to Shaun. Ron added that the second annual *Female Frontline Camp* will be held in July. They have lots of donations. It would be great if chiefs showed up on closing ceremony to support their efforts. They asked Ron to reach out to media outlets.

Mike is working on hosting an EV course for the County. Waiting for dates from the instructor.

Mike noted that GICMAA is no longer a 501(c)3.

Ray added the Allenholm Farm will be hosting a first responder appreciation event on Aug. 12 from 10 am to 2 pm. An invite will be sent out later.

Public Comment - None.

Adjourn - Ray motioned to adjourn. Pat seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.